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*575 781 626 their faces. In spite of what he may have seen, the lad cannot rid himself of the supernatural fears with which he has been inculcated from childhood, and the experience is terrifying to a degree. It may be that he has seen some of the whistles, and thereby learnt that the strange sounds are made by men, not by supernatural beings. In this case he is shown their mechanism in detail, and warned of the dire fate which will befall him if he tells others of his knowledge. Fear impels him to silence, and at the same time he realizes that what he has discovered has placed him in a superior position to that of his former associates. He feels, too, that he has been admitted into the ranks of the society in which his father, grandfather, and ancestors have distinguished themselves, and that it would be desecration to make light of what they have held sacred. Finally, an initiate does not at first grasp the fact that all the rites are deceptions, and by the time that this is apparent to him he has become so thoroughly a part of the organization that he has no thought of betraying his associates, upsetting a vital part in the complicated fabric of Bella Coola life, and exposing himself to ruin and death. A logical white man might think these considerations insufficient, but the existence of the society proves that the varied motives operate so strongly that a young man does keep silence. Some informants state that hypnotism was formerly used to ensure obedience.

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*575 ● 176 781 424 The *kukusiut* are always ready to deal with an emergency such as sometimes occurs in spite of every precaution. It is remembered that about one hundred and fifty years ago during a dance at the village of *Nuqāymāti*, a figure, representing one of the supernatural beings, had the misfortune to drop his mask, the strings by which it was tied having worn through. The house was crowded with uninitiated to whom the deception at once became apparent. For a moment there was wild confusion, but the senior *kukusiut* rose to the occasion and closed the door, allowing no uninitiated person to leave. Then a *kusiut* was sent out with a whistle which he sounded as if the supernatural being of which it was the voice was growing

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nearer and nearer, till finally a thump was heard on the roof. 575*
O ····, cried out the *kukusiut*, "it is my patron." 176 ●
The uninitiated were told that in consequence of the disaster, the supernatural beings had sent calls to this earth for all within the house. Even small children were admitted on this occasion. Those *kukusiut* in whose families were dormant prerogatives at once explained to their relatives that the call was from the patron of one of these, and that henceforth the person addressed was a protégé of that being. But even with the assistance of all the *kukusiut*, there were not sufficient privileges for all who had seen the accident. The explanation hastily agreed upon for those who could not otherwise be provided with prerogatives, was that a supernatural being mentioned in the myth from which the uninitiated had derived his ancestral name had come as patron. Repositories were stated to exist in various places near the village for the designations thus created, and order had been restored before morning. This event was described by so many informants that its historical accuracy can hardly be challenged. Those so initiated were said to have become "*kukusiut* under easy circumstances"; as prerogatives they had merely the right of singing about their respective patrons, not of performing any particular dramatic dance; but they were, none the less, fully qualified members of the society. The prestige and influence of this organization can be estimated by the fact that it was thus able to carry through a wholesale initiation without its secrets becoming known in adjacent villages. Those admitted, though realizing that deception was being practised, were so overawed by the other members of the society that they accepted what was told them without question, entirely failing to use their common sense. Thus, this incident, which had at first threatened disaster, ultimately reacted to the advantage of the *kukusiut*. It is true that their prestige was somewhat diminished by the admission of young people, but in compensation they claimed many new patrons, including several regarded with veneration owing to their occurrence in ancestral myths. Since the latter 575*
176
781
424

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[575 / 176]

part of the last century it has become customary to explain the dropping of a mask as due to a sudden call to the bearer.

Another means by which the *ɬaɬaxiut* protect themselves from doubting non-members is by the use of spies. The marshals (II, p. 16) of the society select some intelligent youth and ask the consent of his father, or other guardian, to make him a spy. If this is granted, the youth is lured into the woods and carried forcibly to the sacred meeting-place, where he finds the senior *ɬaɬaxiut* of his village seated, an awe-inspiring band. They explain to him the deceits used, show him the whistles and other equipment, and instruct him that it is his duty to inform them if he hears any uninitiated person casting doubts on the rites of the society. Proud of his trust, and fearful of what would happen should he fail to carry out his duties, the spy begins his work. Ignorant of his knowledge, the uninitiated have no hesitation in talking with him and if he hears one of them expressing doubts as to the powers of the society, or telling that he has seen the sacred meeting-place or some of the regalia, he at once notifies one of the marshals. The overconfident person is then initiated. Thus the *ɬaɬaxiut* are constantly recruiting their strength from the most intelligent uninitiated, thereby adding to the influence of their society and lessening the dangers from non-members.

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Sometimes a man is forced to undertake the task on account of too great knowledge of *ɬaxiut* matters. The following incident, related by a spy, is worth recording as a concrete example of this point:

Between 1870 and 1880, a Rivers Inlet Cannibal performed the Cannibal dance in Bella Coola, presumably being entitled to do so by a Bella Coola name and prerogative. During his period of seclusion he died from a sudden hemorrhage, and the uninitiated were told that he had been carried away to the mysterious regions of the sky, the customary explanation in such circumstances. Soon afterwards some Bella Coola returned from Victoria, and an old woman told them the news, ignorant of the fact that an uninitiated lad of fifteen had entered the house and was listening eagerly. A careless movement betrayed his presence to the horrified *ɬaɬaxiut* and the boy fled, terrified at the turn of events.

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[The Dance of Noakxnim]

while X dances to and fro behind the fire. In succession the six songs previously composed are resung and X dances to each. The singers would be disgraced should they forget either a tune or a text, so they take advantage of *Isuxtämem* to practise them all. Later in the season, when numerous *kukusiut* have received calls, the singers beat out the time and words for each and the owner dances. The general effect is remarkably impressive in the dim light of one of the large wooden houses, nor is the music displeasing to the ear. After the singing of X's seventh song, there is a pause while food is distributed amid the admonitions of the marshals. Once more the singers take up their sticks and beat out the song most recently composed for X; the audience joins in softly and he dances. The *kukusiut* now disperse with the exception of the novices who sleep in X's house. He himself does not withdraw to his platform. The ritual of X's *Isuxtämem* differs from that of most *kukusiut* since his comrades have already learnt six songs for him. On most occasions they hear and practise one only, to which he dances in the manner described.

The next day is *nusiutälsap*. About eleven o'clock in the morning the heralds go to every house calling out:

Tlpänap, llpänap, kukusiaot, "Cut, cut, ye *kukusiut*."

The uninitiated do not realize that this is an invitation to gather to cut wood for masks. X, or his relatives, always provides a meal which is eaten before the main work is attended to. Then the singers group themselves and compose still another song[1] for X, with the same theme, but different words, as the one composed the previous evening. When ready, they chant it loudly so that all can hear and learn, and then sing it with the audience joining in, while X dances. After a short pause, X asks as many of his comrades as he desires to go with him to the forest to cut wood. Some member of the party carries a whistle which he sounds at intervals, thus warning

[1] This would normally be a dancer's second song, the large number practised for X before the coming of his call being unusual. Not many years ago a powerful chief created the innovation of having one song only instead of two. Some *kukusiut* follow his example whereas others still use two.

6:Boas E-5 (1886-ca. 1890)1892
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what cause this divergence is due. Mythology and religion are so closely connected that a few words on the former must be added here. The principal deity of the Bilqula is Snq, the sun-god (compare sîaq, sun). The rays of the sun are his eyelashes. When prayed to he is called Tâat'an. In praying the Bilqula look heavenward. I obtained the following formulas: *Atlkun ûlô'tlsnq, Tâat'an,* 'Look on us where we are going, Tâat'an;' and *Tâat'an, atlkmalmomdû'ilq,* 'Take care of us, Tâat'an.' Snq is pre-eminently the ruler of the world, and does not interfere with the actions and thoughts of men. These are given by Mamamalâ'niq. According to the tradition of the Bilqula, before the liberation of the sun, and before the world was made as it is nowadays, four deities lived on the earth: Mamamalâ'niq, Yula'timot, Matlapê'eqoek, and Itl'îtlu'lak. The raven wished to obtain the sun, but he was unable to liberate it. Then he went to these deities and asked their help. They ascended to the sky, and tore the curtain, which up to that time had been expanded between heaven and earth, hiding the heavenly orbs. The sun appeared, but he shone dimly, as though darkened by clouds. The raven ascended to heaven through the rift made by Mamamalâ'niq, and found there a beautiful prairie country in which all the birds lived. Mamamalâ'niq and his brothers painted them beautifully and sent them down to earth, giving each his song and his arts. The raven was not content with the sun, and resolved to try and find a better one. He flew to the house of a great chief, who kept the *nuspê'mis* (*nu*-for=place of, *sp'm*=the day is dawning). The *nuspê'mis* was a small round receptacle closed all around like an egg. The chief guarded it jealously, and kept it suspended from one of the rafters of his house. The raven knew that he could not obtain it by sheer force, and resorted to a ruse. He assumed the shape of the leaf of a spruce tree, and let himself drop into the pond from which the chief's daughter used to take water. The girl drank from the pond, swallowed the leaf, and thus became with child. She gave birth to a boy, who was the raven himself. The old chief loved the boy dearly, and allowed him to play with the *nuspê'mis*. This was what he desired. He ran out of the house, broke it, and flew away in the shape of a raven.

After the sun had thus been obtained Mamamalâ'niq said: 'Let us make man.' He made the image of a man out of wood, but he was unable to endow it with breath. Matlapê'eqoek and Itl'îtlu'lak tried likewise to carve human figures and to give them life, but they failed. Finally, Yula'timot carved the figure of a man and endowed it with life. He made a man and a woman in each country, and they became the ancestors of all the numerous tribes. Then Mamamalâ'niq gave them their arts. He taught them to build canoes, to catch salmon, to build houses. He made rivers everywhere, that man should have water to drink, and that the fish might go up the rivers to be caught by man.

The Bilqula believe that Mamamalâ'niq and his brothers still continue to give new ideas to man. They say that any new design of painting or carving, or any other new invention made by a member of their tribe, has been given to him by Mamamalâ'niq.

The religious side of the potlatch and of the secret societies has been referred to above.

The soul is believed to dwell in the nape. It is similar in shape to a bird inclosed in an egg. If the shell of the egg breaks and the soul flies away its owner must die. Shamans are able to see and to recover souls.